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ABSTRACT

The Experience Based Career Education (EBCE) program of career and vocational development is designed to help high school-age migrant students stay in school, plan appropriate classes, and make realistic educational and employment choices. Developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, EBCE is a highly individualized, fully credentialed educational experience which combines basic skills and educational requirements with career development and community based work-experience programs. EBCE increases students' growth in academic achievement, social development, career knowledge, independence, and employability by providing the opportunity for them to try out adult work in a variety of settings and to complete structured and documented work experiences. EBCE can be a partial or complete curriculum and can involve the strategies of career exploration, career seminars, individualized learning projects, life survival skills, career journals, and learning levels. Prior to implementing EBCE, districts should resolve the issues of flexible academic credit, coordination with paid work-experience programs, district-wide involvement, collaborative planning, migrant parent involvement, recruitment of local businesses, transportation, insurance, and collaboration with other national migrant programs such as the Migrant Student Record Transfer System. Profiles of EBCE students and an EBCE program in Woodburn, Oregon and a list of resources and references are included. (SB)

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Choices For Migrant Youth
Ideas for Action in Education and Work

By

Rosalind Hamar and Andrea Hunter

September 1983

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Choices For Migrant Youth

by Rosalind Hamar and Andrea Hunter

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Needs of Migrant Youth

The children of migrant farmworkers statistically have the highest dropout rate and the lowest level of academic achievement in the nation. This group of young people, about 70 percent of whom are Hispanic, face devastating barriers to educational success. Their double burden of poverty and migration is so frustrating that nearly 80 percent never graduate from high school. Most drop out by the 10th grade.

- *Dalia misses 50 days of school in one semester to babysit a sick little brother while her parents work in the fields. Because of school attendance policies, she receives no credits, even though she gets excellent grades when she is able to attend classes.*

- *Jose is discouraged and disappointed upon his return from a class field trip to a local college. Although very bright and capable, he has no hope that college is financially or academically possible.*

- *Carlos leaves a small town in Texas to move with his family to a middle-sized town in Washington. As Carlos is unfamiliar with the transportation system, recreational facilities, public agencies, and other community resources, he feels estranged, lost and reluctant to seek opportunities outside the immediate neighborhood.*

- *Eugenia knows she will be a very good mother if she chooses to have a family, but she also assumes she will then have no income earning skills and no reason to continue her education.*

- *Tomas has worked in the fields with his parents for a number of years and makes a significant financial contribution to his family. Unlike other high school students with diverse job histories, his work experience leads him only to seasonal work where jobs are declining and career advancement nonexistent.*

These students represent nearly 1 million migrant youth who do not receive equal benefits from the public school system. Their family work calendars are not in harmony and consistent with school calendars. Students often leave school before the year ends and return after classes are scheduled. Therefore, they often receive neither final grades for one year nor appropriate classes for the next. In addition, the school they attend during the late spring and early fall may or may not have a credit-granting system similar to the school they leave.

IDEAS FOR ACTION in Education and Work

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

September 1983

Until the late 1970s, most of the efforts of Migrant Programs in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (now Chapter 1 of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act) were directed at elementary-age children in the hope that early school successes would increase the number of migrant students who graduate from high school. Although much progress has been made--in some areas dropout rates are less than 70 percent--there is a long way to go before migrant youth experience success equal to their nonmigrant peers. Studies of this problem suggest that high school programs should be more individualized and personalized, more flexible and transportable and, especially, more motivating.

The 1981 National Policy Workshop on Education for Secondary Migrant Youth stressed the need to share "successful models" of programs that meet the special educational needs of migrant youth. Research is supported by educators who identify the following critical needs for migrant youth:

1. Improvement in basic skills, particularly language facility
2. Broader knowledge of career opportunities
3. Acquisition of job search skills
4. Development of positive self-concept and realistic self-expectations
5. Development of independent living and adult survival skills
6. Ability to contribute to family income
7. Access to a school program that provides continuity without disrupting a family's economic moves

This list indicates that concern for migrant youth includes their unique educational needs as well as their immediate and future employability needs.

There are numerous career and vocational opportunities offered in our high schools. However, as many migrant youth have already dropped out of school by the time they are eligible for such programs, they receive little preparation for work outside the migrant stream. This paper describes Experience Based Career Education (EBCE), a career development program that helps 8th and 9th grade students understand the importance of staying in school. Additionally, it helps 10th grade students plan appropriate classes while assisting 11th and 12th grade students in making realistic choices about jobs and further education. In thinking back to the five students described previously, consider the following ways these young people can profit from EBCE:

- *In the EBCE program, Dalia's work is prescribed and evaluated based on her personal, academic and family needs; she can accrue actual partial credits for all work that meets course objectives.*
- *Upon entering the EBCE program, Jose's teachers continuously encourage him to think about his interests and skills and find ways to apply those skills to a number of career possibilities. In his junior year, the EBCE staff then helps Jose plan senior year classes that will prepare him for college. They also help Jose seek scholarship information.*
- *When Carlos's EBCE teacher in Texas learned that he was leaving, she wrote a learning project for him titled, "Survival Skills for a New Community." Carlos' project activities helped to make him aware of his new town; they also included English and math objectives from his home high school in Texas to which he will return and eventually get credit for completing the project.*
- *In her EBCE program, Eugenia does onsite explorations at a children's ward of a hospital, a day care center and at an adoption agency. After completing course objectives requiring her to interview workers and do some research on the necessary training, Eugenia realizes her own skills and interest could lead to paid employment.*
- *The EBCE teacher provides Tomas with opportunities to explore a variety of other jobs while helping him identify the employability skills he already has, such as responsibility and productivity.*

Interstate Migrant Experience Based Career Education (EBCE)

The four Western Stream states of Washington, Oregon, California and Texas share responsibility for over 42,000 high school-age migrant youth who move within and between their respective boundaries. The State Directors of Migrant Education in these four states, in their commitment to improve the quality and equality of secondary education, have accepted the challenge of ultimate employability for their youth. One of their solutions is EBCE.

EBCE is a Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP) approved program that was developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) and has operated on a national basis since 1971. It offers secondary migrant youth an approach to learning that helps these young people see connections between "learning" and "earning." EBCE is a highly individualized, fully credentialed educational experience which uses the entire community as a learning resource. EBCE activities increase a student's growth in academic achivement, social development and career knowledge by providing an opportunity to "try out" adult work responsibilities; for example, hands-on activities in laboratories, offices, factories, shops, hospitals, courtrooms, studios, banks or wherever people are engaged in everyday work tasks. By completing structured and documented experiences in a variety of work settings, students develop independence and employabilty skills.

The EBCE model helps schools address many of the education and employability needs of their migrant youth:

- EBCE combines basic skills and required academic courses with career development.
- EBCE is individualized and personalized, allowing flexibility for learning styles and skill levels.
- EBCE is community based and helps migrant youth broaden their career horizons by using the community as a learning resource.

- EBCE is equally successful in both rural and urban communities.
- EBCE motivates students to stay in school by teaching academic skills in conjunction with personal interests and career goals.
- EBCE is compatible with other programs such as Secondary Credit Exchange, the Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) and the Migrant Student Record Transfer System.
- EBCE provides young people with tools for lifelong learning and employability.
- EBCE can be combined with work experience-type programs where young people "earn while they learn."

Implementation

All EBCE activities are tailored to meet a student's individual needs, abilities, learning styles and goals. Each student learns through ongoing relationships with a variety of working adults in the community. It is through these interactions with adults that EBCE students learn about careers, life, other people and themselves. Students acquire basic skills, and complete academic courses while gaining competence in the skills necessary to function successfully in a technological society. They learn to be responsible and productive by following accountability standards which parallel the standards adults are expected to maintain on a job.

Perhaps most important, students in EBCE learn how to learn: that is, they learn how to plan learning activities, how to find and use resources in the community and how to build on and profit from daily experiences. Learning becomes a lifelong process with rewards directly related to each individual's personal choices and goals.

EBCE accomplishes its goals by combining a number of rather traditional learning concepts; for example, basic skills, academic courses, career planning, job search skills and others in a unique structure that revolves around a local business community cooperating with school teachers and counselors. EBCE can offer a complete academic curriculum or it can provide portions of a comprehensive curriculum. In all cases, teachers continually apply theory to reality: they combine math with critical thinking, reading with job skills, career development with personal and social development, youth with adults and parents with educators. An interested school district can offer any combination of the following learning strategies:

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1. Career explorations: through a series of short, structured community based explorations, migrant students learn to make realistic career and vocational choices.
2. Career seminars: periodic group meetings of students, employers and other community people, such as labor officials, help students understand important work issues such as job discrimination, career mobility, personnel benefits and others.
3. Individualized learning projects: a personally negotiated learning contract; project activities integrate basic skills, life skills and job skills while teaching toward academic course objectives.
4. Life survival skills: local community experts identify essential adult survival skills and serve as "certifiers" when migrant youth set up appointments to demonstrate their proficiencies.
5. Career journal: a written dialogue between student and staff that encourages discussion of job experiences, changing interests and values. The journal helps migrant students develop and use writing skills as they communicate their impressions, problems and accomplishments.
6. Learning level: an internship at a community job site during which a migrant student completes an individually negotiated project based on detailed job task analysis.

The following profile describes some of the experiences a student may have in an EBCE program.

Luis — One Student's Experience

Luis is an 18-year old senior from Texas, who migrated to the Yakima Valley area of Washington State in early spring. When he and his family left Texas, Luis knew he needed two credits to complete his high school work and was very anxious to graduate with his friends. Negotiations with his home school counselor resulted in an agreement that Luis could graduate if he completed two additional credits while in Washington. Luis, therefore, enrolled in the Pasco Migrant EBCE Program and contracted with his teacher to complete two individualized projects which would give him the needed credits in English and biology. At the same time, Luis' basic skill levels were assessed and his future education and career plans were discussed. Luis' math skills were good, but his reading and writing abilities were very low. He had not given much thought to future education and career plans, but he expressed an interest in retail sales.

Luis' EBCE teachers were concerned about the difficulty Luis would have in college if his reading skills did not improve. They arranged for special tutoring in reading and writing; they also arranged for Luis to get glasses as he was experiencing severe headaches during reading assignments. To help Luis think more realistically about career plans, three 2-week community explorations were set up at a pharmacy, a men's clothing store and a hardware store. Through these experiences, Luis learned facets of the retail business he really liked and some he didn't like, but overall, he became much more committed to a career in retail marketing. At this point, he decided to pursue an associate degree in business at a community college. Luis' plan was appropriate for him in view of his family's financial needs and his own needs for additional tutoring in reading and writing. At the end of Luis' spring and summer EBCE experience, he transferred his English and biology credits to Texas via the Secondary Credit Exchange and received his high school diploma. In August, Luis and his family returned to Texas where Luis planned to get a part-time job in retail sales and enroll in a local community college. He left Washington armed not only with his high school diploma but with a Record of Performance reflecting his community EBCE experiences and letters of recommendation from employers with whom he had worked.

Woodburn High School is an example of one EBCE implementation model:

Woodburn High School EBCE Project

Woodburn High School is in the agricultural community of Woodburn, Oregon, in the heart of the fertile Willamette Valley. Thirty miles to the north is Portland, the largest city in the state, and fifteen miles to the south is Salem, the state capitol. Woodburn is a unique multiethnic community that includes large numbers of senior citizens, Old Believer Russians and Hispanic families. Like the community, the schools are multiethnic. At the elementary level, the student population is approximately one-third Russian, one-third Hispanic and one-third Anglo. However, these percentages change in high school, when many Russian and Hispanic students drop out of school.

The EBCE program is part of Woodburn High School's effort to lower the severe dropout rate. Students in the EBCE program are both Russian and Hispanic 9th graders. Judy Bairey, one of two EBCE teachers, said, "Kids felt special from the very beginning, just to be in the program." Students are enrolled for four class periods each day, or half their school schedule. They divide their EBCE time between job exploration sites in the community and the EBCE Center. In addition to an elective credit, students can receive credits in math, global studies, English and health--subjects chosen because of the difficulty students generally experience in these classes.

The goals and objectives of each course are incorporated into the EBCE learning projects previously described. Completed in the context of weekly job explorations in the local community, these projects help students learn how academics and career opportunities interrelate.

Staff members in the EBCE Center teach the academic courses, offer English language tutoring and coordinate student learning activities with the job exploration sites. They are certified teachers who received five days of inservice training from EBCE developers/trainers at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. In addition to their enthusiasm and energy, they are committed to making high school an academically meaningful experience--one that leads to

equal opportunity for economic productivity.

As noted by Gene Bottoms, President of the American Vocational Association, in the New York Times, "the education system has to be concerned with preparing youngsters not only with entrance level skills, but also with the ability to progress up the career ladder."[1] The EBCE teachers in Woodburn understand this problem all too well, especially for migrant youth who are traditionally trapped in dead end jobs.

Also noted in the New York Times--"The attitude job-seekers bring to the work place may be as important as their skills. Prodded by employers, schools are paying attention to this kind of preparation."[2]

This concept is reinforced by the enthusiastic response of the business community in Woodburn. It took very little time for EBCE instructor Hugh Reynolds to recruit 22 local business people to help migrant students learn about the world of work. Job sites and volunteer professional people include:

Chamber of Commerce
Child care center
Veterinary clinic
Orthodontist
Woodburn City Manager
Auto parts store
Insurance company
Real estate office
Salud de la Familia Medical Clinic

All have indicated their desire to continue working with the EBCE program during the next school year.

Dalia Torres, migrant education coordinator for the Woodburn Public Schools, noted that "this is the first time the local business community has been actively involved in one of our migrant programs."

Student successes in the Woodburn High School EBCE Program are clearly evident:

- One young girl who had missed over 58 days of school enrolled in EBCE and began to attend school more regularly.
- Successful experience with a local business person helped students feel more confident. One student had rarely used a telephone before calling to set up a job exploration appointment.
- As students keep a daily journal of activities, they are writing more, a particularly important activity for English as a Second Language (ESL) students.
- EBCE staff have noted that when students make appointments with adults at job exploration sites, they demonstrate time accountability and initiative; traits that are beginning to carry over into the classroom.

Pete McCallum, Woodburn High School Principal, said about the program, "This is sensational! It is one of the better things that's ever come out of our migrant program here in Woodburn. It's the best career education model I've seen and I'd like to see it incorporated for all students." Mr. McCallum also expressed his delight at the enthusiastic participation of the local business community.

Migrant students at Fallbrook High School in Fallbrook, California (40 miles north of San Diego) are receiving an educational opportunity very similar to their peers in Woodburn. Fallbrook High School operates a half day program for 10th, 11th and 12th grade students that is integrated with academic courses and English/ESL classes. As the high school district cooperates closely with the Migrant Education Region IX office in San Diego, regional staff will disseminate the program to other interested school districts.

Although student motivation and employability increases with the intensity of student experiences, there are a variety of less comprehensive, yet effective, ways to implement EBCE for migrant youth. The following list suggests some of those ways:

- Provide summer school programs relating academic work to job experiences.
- Coordinate with a paid work experience program, either summer or year-round.
- Use EBCE projects as packets for schools working with the Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS).
- Arrange for counselors/advisors to manage the life survival skills component on an individualized

basis or plan career seminars that are particularly important for migrant students.

- Arrange for a community aide to coordinate activities with parents and local business people.
- Encourage clubs and organizations such as 4-H, and other special interest groups to sponsor career development activities.
- Strengthen communication with students by using the career journal.

Some Key Issues

There are a variety of ways school districts can incorporate EBCE strategies into the existing curriculum. This guide describes an ideal approach; local sites can adapt variations of this design based on their individual needs. Several important issues should be carefully considered before implementing EBCE strategies. Resolution of the following issues should be an initial step in preliminary planning:

1. EBCE is designed to offer academic credit in a number of academic areas. Therefore, school districts should be flexible in awarding partial credits based on "time on task," as clearly outlined in EBCE strategies.

2. The financial needs of migrant youth provide a strong rationale for coordinating EBCE with paid work-experience programs. Such programs should be carefully developed so students receive specific job experience combined with general career awareness and planning.

3. As EBCE adds career relevance to existing school curriculum, it is an important supplementary program for migrant students. EBCE can increase enrollment in the upper high school grades; therefore, planning coordination should involve all district personnel.

4. Most successful EBCE programs have started with collaborative planning efforts. Success in providing employability development activities for youth is closely connected to the communication between school district staff and migrant education coordinators.

5. Parents play an active role in EBCE programs; existing parent advisory councils should be used to strengthen this relationship.

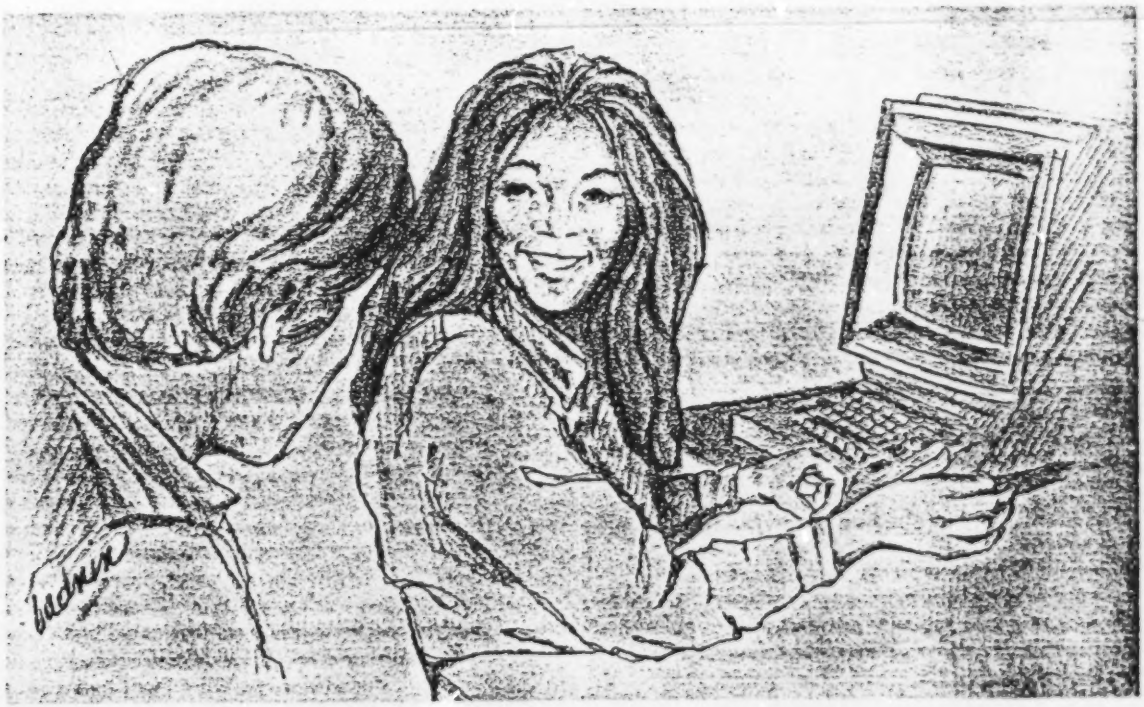
6. EBCE programs are dependent upon the volunteer efforts of the local business community; therefore, these persons should be recruited in a forthright and positive manner.

7. Transportation and insurance are two logistical issues that need to be resolved within the guidelines of each individual district. This can be coordinated with state migrant education service centers.

8. EBCE has potential for collaboration with other migrant education programs. The Secondary Credit Exchange (SCE) program, which primarily serves migrant youth who move between Texas and Washington, provides an excellent model for the transfer of student work. SCE offers strategies which can be integrated into EBCE programs and can serve the needs of young people who move back and forth between two locations. The Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) program was originally created to serve the needs of young people who move within the state of California.

It was designed to help migrant youth complete high school by carrying their work, such as EBCE, with them. PASS now assists students who move interstate to unpredictable destinations. The Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS) has served to help educators keep track of migrant students who move frequently. As MSRTS involves a record format that transfers information about a students' secondary program, the system could also be employed to transfer EBCE-related information.

The success of a school district in providing exemplary career and vocational preparation for its migrant youth is dependent upon two factors: (1) the district's commitment to the role education plays in preparing youth for employment and (2) the district's willingness to be flexible in offering and awarding academic credit.



Resources and References

This issue of Ideas for Action just begins to tell the story of how schools are starting to help migrant youth break out of the cycle of poverty.

For those schools wishing to learn more about EBCE and its use with migrant youth, the following section lists additional resources, including individuals and organizations who are experienced and willing to provide assistance.

1. 1980 Vice President's Task Force on Youth Unemployment, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Youth Programs, 1980.

2. Hunter, Bruce, Credit Accrual and Exchange Seminar Report, Education Commission of the States, 1980.

3. Owens, Tom, "Experience Based Career Education: Summary and Implications of Research and Evaluation Findings" Child and Youth Services Journal, Vol. 4, No. 3/4, 1982.

4. EBCE Handbooks
   A set of five handbooks describe from start to finish the processes for planning and operating the total EBCE program, with practical suggestions on procedures to follow and adaptations to make. Available from Education and Work Program, NWREL.

   Management & Organization
   Suggestions are given for program planning, staffing, management and community linkages.

   Curriculum and Instruction
   The content and processes of student learning in EBCE are explained; resources a community based program makes available to students are described.

   Employer/Community Resources
   Suggestions are given for recruiting, developing and using private and public sector sites to support student learning and career development.

   Student Services
   Considerations and procedures are described for recruiting students, orienting them to the program, recording their academic progress and supporting and guiding their personal career growth.

   Program Evaluation
   Suggestions and techniques are given for persons responsible for evaluating EBCE as a nontraditional alternative for education.

5. EBCE Filmstrips
   Available from Education and Work Program, NWREL.

   #1 Introduction to EBCE
   Provides a general description of the concept of Experience Based Career Education and introduces general strategies and goals of the program.

   #2 EBCE Learning Strategies: The Story of Todd
   The actual experiences of one student in an EBCE program are portrayed.

6. McClure, Larry, Experience Based Learning, How To Make the Community Your Classroom. Bethesda, MD: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 153-916, 1977.

7. Anderson, Carol, Occupational Career Training for Migrant Youth, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Co.

8. EBCE Student Materials
   Available from Education and Work Program, NWREL.

   Student Record of Community Exploration Guide
   Student Guide to Writing a Journal
   Student Competencies Guide: Survival Skills for a Changing World

Some Key Resource People

1. Jose Garcia, State Director
   Chapter I-Migrant
   Department of Education
   700 Pringle Parkway, S.E.
   Salem, OR 97310
   (503) 373-1378

2. Elaina Hershowitz
   Frank Ludovina
   Region IX
   San Diego County Schools
   6401 Linda Vista Road
   San Diego, CA 92111
   (619) 292-3642

3. Andrea Hunter, Youth Coordinator
Education and Work Program
300 S.W. Sixth Avenue
Portland, OR 97204
1-800-547-6339 x 459 (toll free)

4. Ted Kildegaard
EBCE Dissemination Project
1926 Divisadero
San Francisco, CA 94115
(415) 565-3134

5. Susan Morse, Western Field Coordinator
Interstate Migrant Secondary Services Project
State Education Building
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

6. Art Newbrough
President
National EBCE Association
4910 Pyndale Avenue
McHenry, IL 60050

7. Dalia Torres, Migrant Coordinator
Woodburn Public Schools
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Footnotes:

1. Gene Bottoms, "Outlook for the 80's Raises Questions About Education," New York Times, September 4, 1983. p. 17 C.

2. Ibid.

Editor's Note

IDEAS FOR ACTION IN EDUCATION AND WORK synthesize information from research and practice on topics of current interest. Other titles in the series include:

Removing Barriers to CETA/School Collaboration (out of print)

Improving Learning in the Workplace

Teaching Independent Living Skills to Youth

Volunteering...Pathway to Paid Employment

Striving for Excellence: Middle Schoolers Study "Work"

Learning Responsibility: The Importance of the Home, School and Workplace

Northwesterners Out of Work: The Human Costs of Unemployment

Northwesterners Out of Work: The Effects of Job Dislocation

For further information, please contact Larry McClure, Program Director or Andrea Hunter, Youth Coordinator, Education and Work Program, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 300 S.W. Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204, 1-800-547-6339 (toll free) or 503-248-6800.

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